

Remarks:

The Examiner is sincerely thanked for his time and frank assessment of the invention given during the interview.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 USC102b as anticipated by Solo. This claim is now canceled without prejudice.

Claims 1-3, 5-13, 21-23, and 25-33 are rejected under 35USC103a as being unpatentable over Langen in view of Solo. Claims 1-3, and 5-13 are now canceled without prejudice.

Claims 21-23 and 25-33 have either been amended or their base claims have been to better distinguish them from Langen.

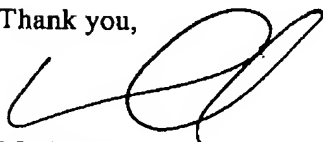
Langen teaches a very fine net designed to prevent children from falling through (and apparently throwing objects through) a flight of stairs. The net is too fine to allow the child to insert any fingers into the net. Thus it could never assist a child in climbing stairs and hence teaches away from the instant invention. As clearly shown in Fig. 8 of the instant invention, the mesh must be larger than at least a few fingers to make it easy for a child to grip the net. The criticality of the mesh size are discussed in the specification on page 7 lines 3-8.

Claims 4 and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC 103a as being unpatentable over Langen in view of Solo and Conner. Claim 4 is now cancelled. The base claim of claim 24 has been amended to better distinguish it from the cited art.

Claims 15-20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103a as being unpatentable over Solo. These claims are now cancelled.

New claims 34-43 have been added to better distinguish the instant invention from the cited art. The number of independent and total claims has been reduced and thus no new fees are required.

Thank you,



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